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FROM FORCED DISPLACEMENT TO TERRITORIAL RESILIENCE: SOCIO-ECONOMIC PRECONDITIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION IN POST-CONFLICT KARABAKH

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Abstract

Post-conflict population return represents one of the most complex challenges of regional development, as it requires not only physical resettlement but also the restoration of socio-economic systems and territorial functionality. In the contemporary global context, empirical evidence on sustainable reintegration remains limited, particularly about resilience-oriented analytical frameworks. This article examines the socio-economic preconditions for sustainable reintegration in the post-conflict Karabakh economic region through the lens of territorial resilience.

Drawing on a systematic analysis of spatial, demographic, sectoral, and investment indicators, the study explores how settlement structure, demographic composition, agricultural performance, and capital investment dynamics shape the region's capacity to absorb returning populations. The findings reveal that Karabakh exhibits a relatively coherent internal spatial structure, a youthful demographic profile exceeding national averages, and a strong agricultural base that contributes significantly to national output. At the same time, pronounced intra-regional disparities, low levels of urbanization, and gender imbalances within the youth cohort highlight structural vulnerabilities that may constrain long-term stability.

The results demonstrate that agriculture functions as a key pillar of rural resilience, while accelerated housing construction and fixed capital investment underpin material foundations for permanent settlement. However, sustainable reintegration depends on territorially differentiated policies that strengthen rural-urban linkages, promote inclusive labor markets, and align settlement planning with economic development strategies. By advancing a resilience-based interpretation of post-conflict reintegration, the article contributes to regional development and post-conflict studies and offers transferable insights for other regions undergoing large-scale population return.

Keywords: *Post-conflict reintegration; territorial resilience; return migration; settlement systems; regional development; Karabakh economic region; SDG1 (No Poverty); SDG8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth); SDG11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities); SDG16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)*

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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary global landscape, armed conflicts continue to generate large-scale forced displacement, profoundly reshaping demographic structures, settlement systems, and regional socio-economic dynamics. The forced removal of populations from their historically inhabited territories has produced long-term consequences that extend far beyond immediate humanitarian concerns, manifesting in persistent social fragmentation, economic stagnation, and spatial inequalities. These effects are not confined to the regions of origin alone; host territories frequently experience increased pressure on labor markets, public services, and infrastructure, alongside growing demographic imbalances and uneven regional development.

Despite the prevalence of conflict-induced displacement worldwide, empirical evidence and conceptual models addressing post-conflict population return and sustainable resettlement remain relatively limited. Existing studies have predominantly focused on short-term return mechanisms or humanitarian dimensions, often overlooking the structural socio-economic conditions necessary for long-term reintegration. Insufficient attention has been paid to the role of territorial resilience as a framework for understanding how post-conflict regions absorb, adapt to, and recover from prolonged displacement while rebuilding viable socio-economic systems.

Population return to post-conflict territories should therefore be conceptualized not merely as a physical act of relocation, but as a multidimensional process involving the restoration of social institutions, the reconstruction of community networks, the revitalization of economic activity, and the reintegration of affected areas into national and regional development systems. Without these interconnected processes, return migration risks remain symbolic or unsustainable, potentially reproducing pre-existing vulnerabilities and undermining long-term stability.

Against this theoretical and empirical backdrop, the Karabakh economic region represents a distinctive case of post-conflict reintegration. Following decades of displacement, the ongoing “Great Return” initiative provides a unique opportunity to examine the socio-economic preconditions required for sustainable reintegration in a post-conflict setting. The scale, state-led nature, and strategic significance of the reconstruction process differentiate Karabakh from many other post-conflict regions and allow for broader analytical generalization.

This study aims to examine the socio-economic foundations of sustainable reintegration in post-conflict Karabakh through the lens of territorial resilience. By systematically analyzing economic, social, demographic, and institutional dimensions, the research seeks to identify key preconditions that support long-term stability and adaptive capacity. In doing so, the article contributes to the literature on post-conflict regional development by advancing a resilience-based analytical framework and by offering empirically grounded insights with relevance beyond the specific case study.

Analysis and comparison

The post-conflict settlement restoration process in Karabakh and East Zangezur demonstrates a clear departure from conventional, path-dependent resettlement approaches that have characterized many post-war regions globally. Unlike traditional models, which often priorities rapid physical reconstruction and administrative feasibility, the contemporary settlement framework applied in these regions is grounded in long-term socio-economic sustainability and territorial resilience (*Cutter, S. L., Burton, C. G., & Emrich, C. T., 2010*). This shift reflects a broader transition from reactive post-conflict recovery towards proactive regional development planning.

From an analytical perspective, the implemented settlement models exhibit several distinctive features when compared to international post-conflict experiences. First, the emphasis on polycentric and cluster-based settlement structures contrasts with the mono-centric or dispersed patterns commonly observed in post-conflict contexts such as the Balkans or parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, where reconstruction has frequently reinforced pre-existing spatial inequalities. In Karabakh and East Zangezur, polycentricity is designed to balance population distribution, reduce pressure on single urban cores, and enhance functional connectivity between settlements (**Figure 1**).

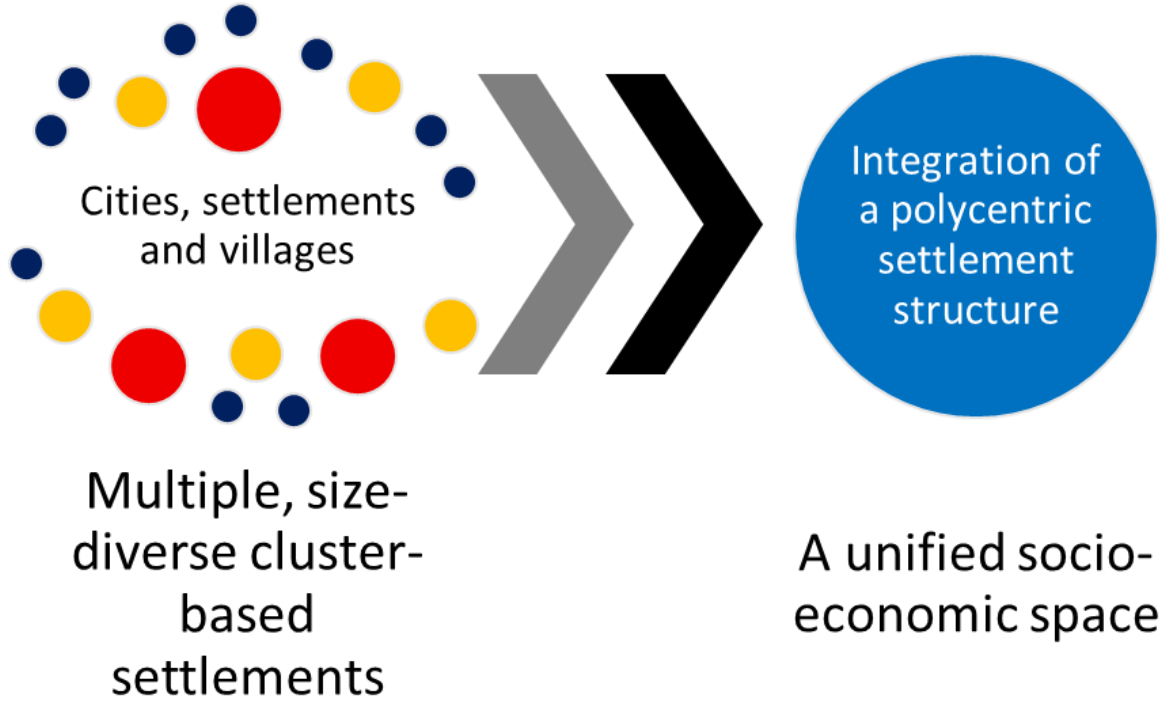


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of transition toward a Polycentric and Cluster-Based Settlement System

Second, the integration of measurable suitability criteria into settlement planning represents a notable innovation. In many post-conflict regions, settlement restoration is largely driven by political imperatives or humanitarian urgency, with limited reliance on systematic monitoring and evaluation frameworks. In contrast, the approach adopted in Karabakh and East Zangezur incorporates empirically derived indicators that assess not only geographical suitability, but also socio-economic resilience, adaptive capacity to economic shocks, and transport-economic efficiency. This multidimensional assessment framework allows for evidence-based prioritization and reduces the risk of unsustainable or symbolic resettlement.

A comparative analysis further reveals that the consideration of social transformation resilience distinguishes this case from more infrastructure-centric models observed elsewhere (*Cutter, S. L., Burton, C. G., & Emrich, C. T., 2010*). While international practices often focus on housing provision and basic services, the settlement strategy in Karabakh and East Zangezur explicitly acknowledges the transformative social dynamics associated with long-term displacement, including changes in livelihood patterns, social norms, and community structures. This recognition enhances the potential for genuine reintegration rather than mere physical return.

Economically, the cluster-based settlement logic aligns more closely with regional development theories emphasizing agglomeration effects and functional complementarities (*Nagiyev, S.G., Bayramov*

I.A., 2024). Compared to isolated settlement reconstruction initiatives in other post-conflict settings, this approach facilitates labor market integration, supports local economic diversification, and improves the cost-effectiveness of transport and service infrastructure. Consequently, settlement restoration functions not only as a social policy instrument, but also as a catalyst for broader regional economic revitalization.

The Karabakh experience illustrates a hybrid post-conflict settlement model that combines spatial planning principles, resilience-oriented socio-economic assessment, and long-term development objectives. In comparative terms, this model offers a transferable analytical framework for other post-conflict regions seeking to move beyond short-term reconstruction towards sustainable territorial reintegration (*Montgomery, M. R., 2008*).

The Karabakh economic region is one of the fourteen officially designated economic regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and occupies a strategically significant position within the national territorial framework. Covering an area of 9.99 thousand km², the region accounts for 11.5% of the country's total territory, while its population of approximately 747.5 thousand people represents 7.3% of the national population. This spatial-demographic configuration indicates moderate population concentration relative to territorial size, suggesting neither excessive demographic pressure nor pronounced underutilization of space.

Applying Yu. L. Pivovarov's influence zone formula, the economic region exhibits a coverage radius (IZR) of 57.2 km, ranking fourth among Azerbaijan's economic regions. The corresponding coverage area (IZA) amounts to 10.3 thousand km², of which 97.0% lies entirely within the administrative boundaries of the Karabakh economic region. Such a high degree of internal coverage reflects strong territorial cohesion and highlights the functional integrity of the region's internal spatial structure. This characteristic is particularly relevant in the context of post-conflict reconstruction, as it facilitates coordinated settlement planning, service provision, and infrastructure development (*Nagiyev, S.G., Bayramov I.A., 2024*).

From a spatial organization perspective, the region demonstrates a favorable internal configuration relative to its geographical center – Khankandi and Shusha. The surrounding administrative districts are situated at relatively balanced distances from these centers, enhancing accessibility and reinforcing the potential for polycentric development. This spatial arrangement reduces peripheral isolation and supports the formation of integrated settlement networks, which are critical for sustainable reintegration processes.

Demographically, the Karabakh economic region has a population density of 75 persons per km². When compared to national averages, the Relative Settlement Index (RSI) stands at 0.64, indicating a balanced settlement pattern without extreme concentration or dispersion. Such a configuration provides a favorable baseline for population return and resettlement, as it allows for both spatial flexibility and efficient allocation of socio-economic infrastructure. Furthermore, the territorial concentration coefficient (CTC) of 4.2 reflects a moderate degree of spatial centralization, suggesting that the region possesses sufficient structural capacity to absorb returning populations without generating excessive territorial imbalances.

These spatial and demographic indicators underscore the Karabakh economic region's relative suitability for large-scale post-conflict reintegration. The combination of territorial coherence, balanced settlement patterns, and functional centrality positions the region as a viable platform for resilience-oriented reconstruction and long-term socio-economic stability.

Research

Table 1 summarizes the principal territorial and demographic characteristics of the administrative districts (cities) of the Karabakh economic region, providing a basis for comparative spatial analysis.The analysis of the territorial and demographic parameters of the administrative units within the Karabakh economic region reveals pronounced intra-regional differentiation in terms of population distribution, settlement intensity, and spatial concentration. Although the region exhibits a balanced Relative Settlement Index (RSI) of 0.64, individual districts display substantial variation, reflecting diverse settlement functions and development potentials (*Nagiyev, S.G., Bayramov I.A., 2024*).

Khankendi city stands out as a highly concentrated urban center. Despite its extremely small territorial size (0.01 thousand km²), it records the highest population density in the region at 440 persons per km² and an exceptionally high RSI value of 5.87. This indicates strong demographic concentration and confirms the city's role as a primary administrative and functional core. However, it's very low territorial concentration coefficient (CTC = 0.005) suggests limited spatial expansion capacity, highlighting structural constraints for accommodating large-scale population return within the city boundaries.

Table 1.

Principal territorial and demographic characteristics of the administrative structure of the Karabakh economic region

№	*Administrative territorial units*	*Territory, thsd. km²*	*Population, thsd. per.*	*Population density*	*IZR, km*	*IZA, km²*	*RSI*	*CTC*
1.	Khankandi city	0,01	4,4	440	10,3	333,3	5,87	0,005
2.	Aghjabadi district	1,76	136,8	78	32,5	3318,3	1,04	0,007
3.	Aghdam district	1,09	175,7	161	35,3	3914,7	2,15	0,126
4.	Aghdara district	1,66	12,1	7	14,5	660,5	0,09	0,150
5.	Barda district	0,95	157,8	166	34,0	3631,7	2,21	0,116
6.	Fuzuli district	1,38	131,5	95	32,0	3217,0	1,27	0,038
7.	Khojaly district	0,93	15,6	17	15,7	774,4	0,23	0,072
8.	Khojavand district	1,51	12,4	8	14,6	669,7	0,11	0,135
9.	Shusha district	0,29	25,2	87	18,5	1075,2	1,16	0,005
10.	Tartar district	0,41	76,0	185	26,7	2239,6	2,47	0,061
***	**Karabakh economic region**	**9,99**	**747,5**	**75**	**57,2**	**10278,8**	**0,64**	**4,2**

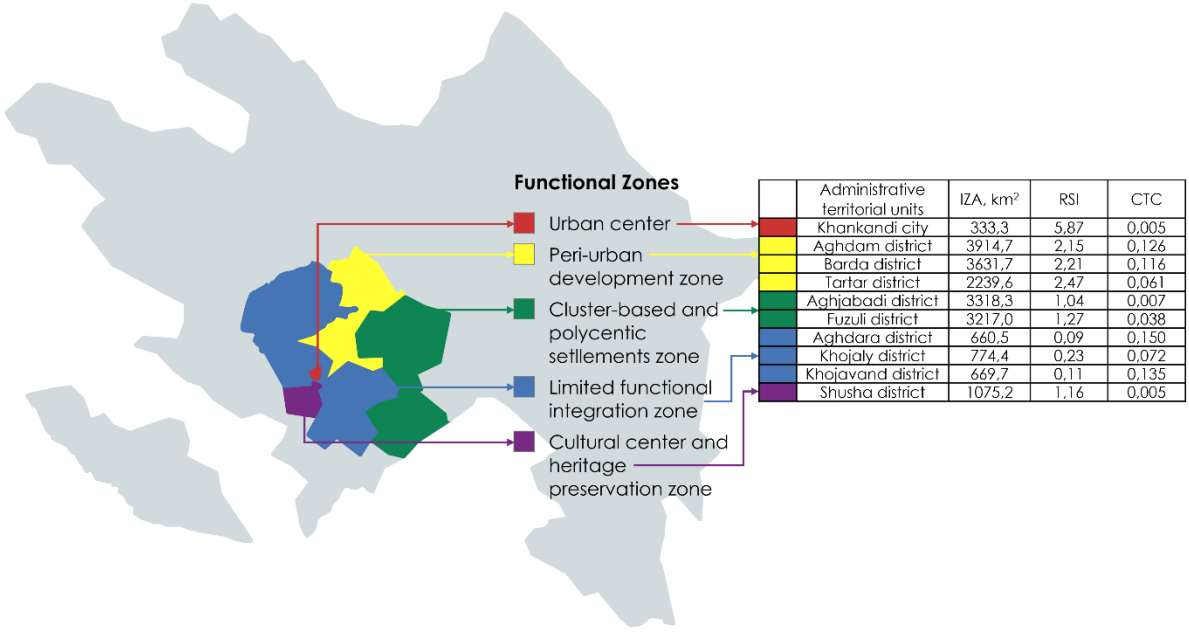
Source: SSC AR, 2025

In contrast, Aghdam, Barda, and Tartar districts exhibit high population densities (161, 166, and 185 persons per km², respectively) combined with elevated RSI values ranging from 2.15 to 2.47. These districts represent secondary population concentration zones with comparatively favorable spatial and demographic conditions. Their moderate CTC values indicate a more balanced territorial distribution, suggesting greater potential for absorbing returning populations through both urban and peri-urban settlement development.

Aghjabadi and Fuzuli districts occupy an intermediate position within the regional settlement hierarchy. With population densities of 78 and 95 persons per km² and RSI values close to or slightly above unity, these districts demonstrate relatively stable settlement patterns. Their larger territorial sizes and moderate influence zone radii provide spatial flexibility, making them suitable candidates for cluster-based and polycentric settlement expansion in the context of post-conflict reintegration.

By contrast, Aghdara, Khojaly, and Khojavand districts are characterized by very low population densities, ranging from 7 to 17 persons per km², and correspondingly low RSI values (below 0.25). These indicators reflect significant demographic underutilization and weak settlement intensity, despite relatively large territorial extents. The elevated CTC values observed in Aghdara and Khojavand suggest spatial fragmentation and limited functional integration, posing challenges for immediate large-scale resettlement without substantial socio-economic and infrastructural intervention.

Shusha district occupies a distinct position within the regional structure. While its population density (87 persons per km²) and RSI value (1.16) indicate a moderate level of settlement intensity, its symbolic, historical, and cultural (*Afandiyev, V., Eminov, Z., & Nagiyev, S. 2014*) significance differentiates it from other districts. The relatively low CTC value reflects a compact spatial structure, implying that future population return must be carefully balanced with heritage preservation and spatial constraints.



	Administrative territorial units	IZA, km²	RSI	CTC
	Khankandi city	333,3	5,87	0,005
	Aghdam district	3914,7	2,15	0,126
	Barda district	3631,7	2,21	0,116
	Tartar district	2239,6	2,47	0,061
	Aghjabadi district	3318,3	1,04	0,007
	Fuzuli district	3217,0	1,27	0,038
	Aghdara district	660,5	0,09	0,150
	Khojaly district	774,4	0,23	0,072
	Khojavand district	669,7	0,11	0,135
	Shusha district	1075,2	1,16	0,005

Figure 2. Territorial Differentiation of Functional Zones in the Karabakh Economic Region

At the aggregate level, the Karabakh economic region demonstrates moderate population density (75 persons per km²) and a territorial concentration coefficient of 4.2, indicating neither excessive centralization nor extreme dispersion. This overall configuration suggests that the region possesses a structurally favorable baseline for resilience-oriented reintegration, if settlement policies account for existing intra-regional disparities and prioritize differentiated, place-specific development strategies.

The contemporary territorial structure of the Karabakh economic region comprises 11 cities, 37 urban-type settlements, and 621 rural settlements, reflecting a predominantly rural settlement pattern with a limited number of urban centers. The cities function primarily as administrative hubs of the respective administrative territorial units, with ten cities sharing names with their districts and serving as district centers. An exception is the city of Horadiz in Fuzuli district, which developed during the period

of occupation and functioned as the administrative center for the non-occupied parts of the district, thereby acquiring a distinct administrative and functional role within the regional settlement system.

Urban-type settlements within the Karabakh economic region are unevenly distributed. They are predominantly concentrated in Aghdam district, which includes the settlement of Guzanli – serving as the district's administrative center during the occupation period – alongside 13 additional settlements. Fuzuli district contains 16 settlements, while Khojavand district includes only two. Notably, Barda and Tartar districts lack urban-type settlements altogether, underscoring the rural orientation of their settlement structures and the limited intermediate urban layer between cities and villages.

The urban structure of the region exhibits distinctive characteristics when assessed through the lens of urbanization indicators. The overall regional urbanization level stands at approximately 32.9%, corresponding to an urban population of 245.9 thousand people. This figure is 21.5 percentage points below the national average, indicating a comparatively low degree of urban concentration. Such a configuration reflects both the historical settlement pattern of the region and the long-term demographic disruptions associated with conflict and displacement.

Significant variation in urbanization levels is observed across individual administrative units. Khankandi represents a fully urbanized entity, with an urbanization level of 100%, confirming its role as the primary urban core of the region. High levels of urbanization are also observed in Shusha (80.2%) and Khojaly (55.1%), reflecting their compact spatial structures and urban-dominant population distribution. In contrast, districts such as Aghdara (8.3%), Aghdam (25%), Barda (26.2%), and Tartar (27%) exhibit markedly low urbanization levels, highlighting the dominance of rural settlements and the limited role of urban centers in shaping demographic patterns.

Intermediate urbanization levels are recorded in Aghjabadi (37.1%), Fuzuli (39%), and Khojavand (29.8%), suggesting transitional settlement structures where urban and rural populations coexist in relatively balanced proportions. These districts may therefore offer greater flexibility for future settlement planning, particularly within polycentric and cluster-based development models.

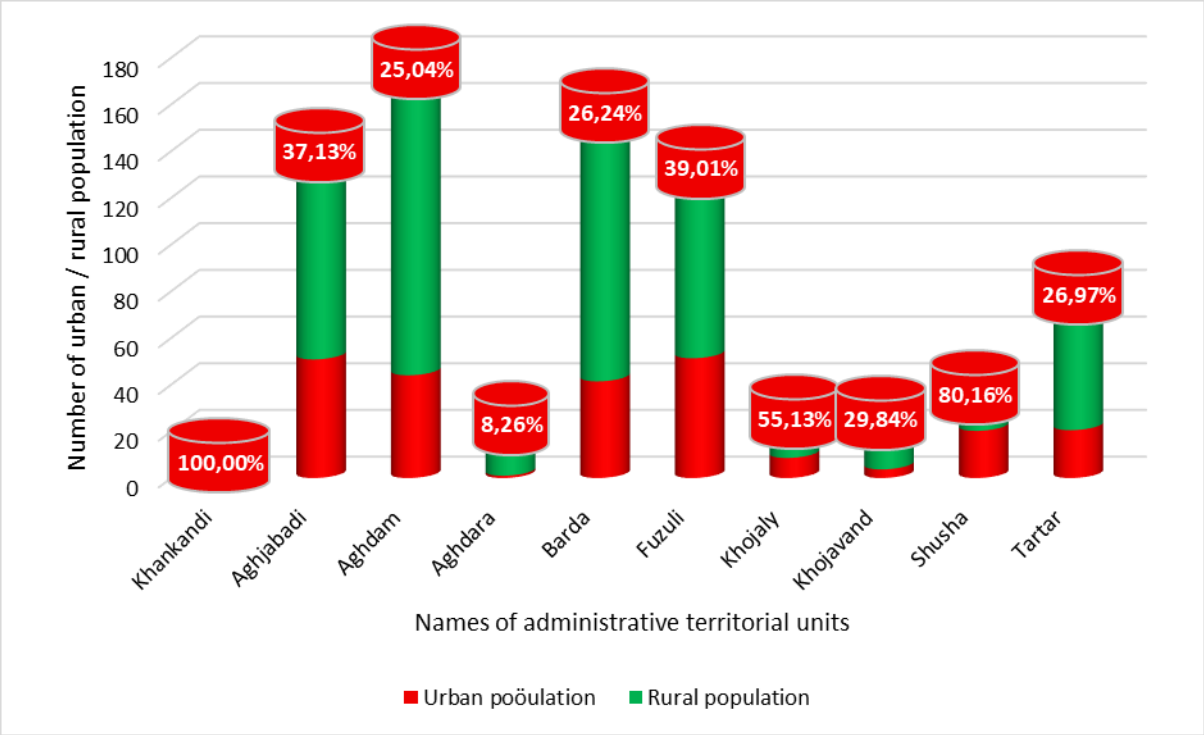


Figure 3. Urban–Rural Population Distribution by Administrative Units in the Karabakh Economic Region

As presented in **Figure 3**, the comparative ratio of urban and rural populations across administrative units underscores the heterogeneous nature of the region's settlement system. Overall, the low regional urbanization level, combined with pronounced intra-regional disparities, suggests that post-conflict reintegration and population return strategies must be territorially differentiated. Urban centers alone cannot absorb returning populations; instead, sustainable reintegration will depend on strengthening rural settlements, improving functional linkages between settlement types, and developing intermediate urban nodes capable of supporting socio-economic resilience.

Within the overall socio-demographic structure of the Karabakh economic region, young people aged 14-29 constitute 23.7% of the population. This proportion exceeds the national average by 1.2 percentage points, indicating a relatively youthful demographic profile. Such a structure represents significant potential for long-term socio-economic revitalization, particularly in the context of post-conflict reintegration and labor market formation.

The spatial distribution of the youth population is markedly uneven. Approximately 33.2% of young people reside in urban areas, while 66.8% are concentrated in rural settlements. This pronounced rural dominance reflects both the settlement structure of the region and the legacy of displacement, and it underscores the importance of rural-oriented development strategies, including education, employment, and social infrastructure, in supporting sustainable population return.

From a gender perspective, the youth cohort is characterized by a moderate gender imbalance. Males account for 53.2% of the youth population, while females represent 46.8%, resulting in a gender ratio of 881 females per 1,000 males. This imbalance may be associated with selective migration patterns, differential return dynamics, and labor-related mobility, and it has important implications for family formation, social cohesion, and long-term demographic stability (*Barrios, S., Bertinelli, L., & Strobl, E.*, 2006)

The relatively high share of young people, combined with their predominantly rural residence and gender-specific distribution, highlights both opportunities and challenges for regional development. If adequately supported through targeted socio-economic policies, the youth population can serve as a key driver of territorial resilience; however, failure to address employment opportunities, education access, and gender-sensitive development risks may exacerbate demographic asymmetries and undermine sustainable reintegration.

On the other hand, given the region's favorable agroclimatic conditions, the development of selected agricultural sectors is essential for ensuring socio-economic resilience in the Karabakh economic region. Agriculture plays a structurally significant role in the regional economy, both as a source of employment and as a driver of post-conflict economic stabilization (*Barrios, S., Bertinelli, L., & Strobl, E.*, 2006).

The physical volume index (PVI) of agricultural production in the Karabakh economic region reaches 112.0 for crop production and 104.7 for livestock production, resulting in an overall index of 110.2 (*The Agriculture of Azerbaijan, 2025*). This figure exceeds the national average by 8.57% and represents the highest value recorded among Azerbaijan's economic regions. Such performance highlights the region's strong production capacity and its potential to support sustainable livelihoods for returning populations (*Afandiyev, V., Eminov, Z., & Nagiyev, S. 2014*).

At the intra-regional level, agricultural growth exhibits notable spatial variation. The highest production indices are observed in Aghjabadi (120.2), Fuzuli (127.1), and Khojavand (168.8) districts, indicating pronounced sectoral dynamism and the presence of favorable production conditions. These districts therefore emerge as key agricultural growth poles with significant potential for employment generation and value-chain development.

In the current year, 11.2% of the country's total agricultural output was generated within the Karabakh economic region, positioning it as the second-largest contributor nationally, following the Gazakh-Tovuz economic region. This ranking underscores the strategic importance of Karabakh within the national agri-food system and its capacity to contribute to food security and export-oriented agricultural production.

In per capita terms, the value of agricultural gross regional product (GRP) in the Karabakh economic region amounts to 1,953.84 AZN, equivalent to $ 1,149.32. This relatively high per capita output further reflects the efficiency and productivity of the regional agricultural sector (*The Agriculture of Azerbaijan, 2025*). Moreover, the region ranks first nationally in terms of cultivated areas for cereals and legumes, including winter and spring wheat, onions, and other key crop products. This dominance in arable land use reinforces the region's role as a core agricultural production zone and strengthens its potential for resilience-based rural development.

Within the framework of implementing the "Great Return" initiative, approximately 60 thousand square meters of residential housing were constructed and commissioned during the 2022–2025 period. Compared to the base year, this represents a 2.52-fold increase, corresponding to an average annual growth rate of 38%. Such a rapid expansion in housing construction reflects a decisive shift from planning-oriented reconstruction to the materialization of permanent settlement infrastructure, which constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable population reintegration.

Parallel to housing development, the volume of investments directed toward fixed capital within the economic region increased by 93.4% over the same period. This substantial growth in capital investment indicates an intensification of economic activity and underscores the strategic prioritization of the region in national reconstruction and development policies. Importantly, the synchronization of residential construction with rising capital investment suggests a coordinated approach to post-conflict recovery, wherein physical settlement development is complemented by broader economic capacity-building.

From a resilience perspective, these trends signal the formation of a material and economic foundation capable of supporting long-term reintegration rather than short-term return. The expansion of housing stock enhances settlement stability, while increased fixed capital investment strengthens production potential, infrastructure provision, and employment creation. Together, these dynamics contribute to reinforcing the adaptive capacity of the region and reducing the risk of secondary out-migration driven by inadequate living or economic conditions.

Results and discussion:

The empirical findings reveal that the Karabakh economic region exhibits a set of structural characteristics that collectively support the transition from post-conflict reconstruction to resilience-oriented reintegration. The results highlight pronounced spatial differentiation, sectoral dynamism, and investment-driven transformation, all of which shape the region's capacity to absorb returning populations in a sustainable manner.

Spatial and Settlement Dynamics. The analysis of territorial and demographic indicators confirms that the Karabakh economic region possesses a relatively coherent internal spatial structure, characterized

by balanced accessibility to its central urban nodes and moderate population density. Despite this overall coherence, substantial intra-regional disparities persist across administrative units. Highly concentrated urban centers, particularly Khankandi, coexist with extensive low-density rural districts, reflecting a historically rural settlement pattern reinforced by prolonged displacement.

The regional urbanization level of 32.9%, significantly below the national average, indicates that urban centers alone cannot function as the primary absorptive spaces for population return. Instead, the predominance of rural settlements – comprising 621 villages alongside a limited number of cities and urban-type settlements – necessitates a territorially differentiated reintegration strategy. This finding supports the adoption of polycentric and cluster-based settlement models, which can leverage secondary hubs and rural-urban linkages to mitigate spatial imbalance and reduce pressure on core cities.

Demographic Structure and Youth Potential. Demographic analysis demonstrates that young people aged 14-29 constitute a relatively high share of the regional population, exceeding the national average by 1.2 percentage points. The concentration of two-thirds of this youth cohort in rural areas underscores the importance of rural-focused socio-economic policies. While this demographic structure presents a significant opportunity for labor market renewal and long-term development, it simultaneously exposes vulnerabilities related to employment availability, service provision, and gender balance.

The observed gender asymmetry within the youth population, with only 881 females per 1,000 males, reflects selective migration and return patterns typical of post-conflict contexts. If left unaddressed, such imbalances may undermine family formation and social cohesion, thereby weakening the foundations of sustainable reintegration. Consequently, demographic resilience in the region depends not only on population return volumes but also on the qualitative composition of returnees.

Agricultural Performance and Rural Resilience. The results indicate that agriculture constitutes a core pillar of socio-economic resilience in the Karabakh economic region. The overall agricultural production index of 110.2 – exceeding the national average by 8.57% and ranking highest among economic regions – demonstrates strong productive capacity. Intra-regional variation further reveals that districts such as Aghjabadi, Fuzuli, and Khojavand function as agricultural growth poles, with production indices reaching up to 168.8.

The region's contribution of 11.2% to national agricultural output and its leading position in the cultivation of cereals, legumes, and key crop products underscore its strategic role within Azerbaijan's agri-food system. In per capita terms, agricultural gross regional product levels further confirm the sector's capacity to generate livelihoods. These findings suggest that agriculture can serve as a primary mechanism for rural employment absorption, particularly for youth, thereby reinforcing the sustainability of population return beyond urban labor markets.

Investment Trends and Housing Development. The analysis of investment and construction dynamics reveals a rapid acceleration of material reconstruction in the context of the "Great Return". The commissioning of nearly 60,000 square meters of residential housing between 2022 and 2025, representing a 2.52-fold increase compared to the base year, signals a shift from symbolic reconstruction to tangible settlement formation. The accompanying 93.4% increase in fixed capital investment further indicates expanding economic capacity and institutional commitment.

Importantly, the parallel growth of housing stock and capital investment reflects an integrated reintegration strategy, wherein residential development is synchronized with broader economic infrastructure. From a territorial resilience perspective, this coordination enhances adaptive capacity by reducing the risk of secondary displacement caused by inadequate housing or limited economic opportunity.

Implications for Territorial Resilience and Sustainable Reintegration. Taken together, the results suggest that sustainable reintegration in post-conflict Karabakh is contingent upon the alignment of spatial

planning, demographic structure, sectoral development, and investment flows. The region's relatively balanced settlement indicators, youthful demographic profile, and strong agricultural base provide favorable preconditions for resilience-oriented development. However, persistent intra-regional disparities, low urbanization, and demographic asymmetries highlight the necessity of place-specific policy interventions.

The Karabakh case illustrates that post-conflict reintegration cannot be reduced to physical return or housing provision alone. Instead, it requires a multidimensional approach that strengthens economic livelihoods, enhances social cohesion, and ensures functional connectivity across settlement types. In this regard, the findings contribute to the broader literature by demonstrating how territorial resilience can serve as an analytical framework for evaluating and guiding population return in post-conflict regions.

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